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DIPARTIMENTO DI GENETICA E MICROBIOLOGIA
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Pavia II

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Dear Josh,

this is a follow up to our plans for my visit to R.U. next year. Please excuse me if I have waited a bit too much to answer to your very kind letter of last summer. Let me brief you on my situation: I am stuck with the University of Calabria, and the chances of getting something in Pavia or Milano, i.e. close to home, are poor. The idea of staying in Calabria is thoroughly unacceptable. I am informally negotiating with the Accademia dei Lincei (you know, it is a sort of Italian Royal Academy, dating back to Galileo's times) the possibility to avail of a structure of theirs which allows university professors to take up to three years of leave, when planning to write books etc. I have been informally reassured that they will accept my application. Only that before placing it I have to become officially full professor "ordinario" from my position of "straordinario" (i.e. I have to finish three full academic years of professorship). I can start the operation to become ordinario next month, but as most of the bureaucratic procedures in Italy, it can take anywhere from 6 to 12 months. So I think it is wiser to look for some other escape routes. One is to apply anyhow with the University of Calabria for a one year sabbatical, starting next academic year: which I will do anyhow. This means that beginning from September 1991 I am available. As I told you, my idea is to spend some 3-6 months in New York, writing and doing research: I am certainly looking forward to sitting in the nice office you are reserving for me at R. U.! By the way, in your letter or FAX you mentioned you had secured some funds for my visit: could I know something more? I need to start looking for a house, unless Rockefeller has something of interest to offer me during the next academic year 1991-1992.

Here in Pavia right now I am busy with a couple of projects related to eucaryotic chromosomes: one aims at designing better cloning systems in YAC, avoiding co-cloning and increasing representativity of the resulting

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libraries: in addition to a simple trick which the enclosed reprint will detail to you, now we are working at a Terminal Transferase based homopolymeric tailing system, of which I am enclosing to you a summary of a paper I should be giving to the next Miami Winter Symposium, January 1991 (by the way and in that period, if you are in town and available I could stop in N.Y. and talk to you). The second involves a related idea: to create artificial chromosomes by adding to a centromere piece (containing a selectable marker) telomere seeding sequences again by means of Terminal Transferase, this time using a mixture of triphosphates calibrated along the basic composition of the telomere repeat (analogous to the Nirenberg-Matthaei genetic code experiment based on the generation of random codons): in yeast we are already working at it by using the YAC plasmids, in humans we hope to obtain from Immo Scheffler, UCSD, a human minichromosome derived from chr. 1 of about 1 Mb with a centromere and a selectable marker. More details will follow, but I would certainly appreciate your comments on them, in particular regarding the opportunity of doing something on this line at Rockefeller (would David Luck be interested at reconstructing a HAC-human artificial chromosome?).

Later next year, after Rockefeller I am considering joining Dusko in Paris at last, but that depends on several factors, including whether I get that sabbatical leave through I Lincei, and therefore I think it is better to concentrate on one problem at a time.

I understand that you will be coming to Pavia next May: that sounds wonderful, even if I might not be here in those days, since I have been invited to a most important meeting in Crete (not bad !) by EEC on the problem of genomes analysis right from 14 through 17 of May, 1991. But even if I am not there to listen and greet you at your inauguration conference (you will not miss me!), I will do my best to see you either before or after.

The organization of the Villa Serbelloni workshop I talked to you about on the release of transgenic organisms is progressing slowly, and I fear it will have to be done in 1992. Any further comment on that note of mine I sent you? I am eager to have more remarks from you: already your recognition I am on the right track has been very gratifying, but I need more and more specific! Then I would like to publish it somewhere: any suggestion?

I trust your experimental work has started and I am anxious to learn how it is progressing: the theme is surely fascinating, and I would love to collaborate. Take care and have my best regards. Ciao e arrivederci soon.

Most sincerely yours

Vittorio